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REFLECTIONS ON MY JOURNEY USING VISUAL MEDIA IN A VOICE RECITAL

by Claudia Salcedo

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
May 2016

Approved by

Advisor: Professor Nancy Maria Balach

Reader: Dr. Michael Gardiner

Reader: Dr. Nancy Wicker

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Finally, I thank my friends and family for their support throughout my four years at the University of Mississippi. I want to specifically thank Anna Brigance for her friendship and support; my fellow music majors for their daily care and encouragement; and my church family at First Presbyterian Church of Oxford for the laughs, prayers, and music. Thank you.

ABSTRACT
Reflections on My Journey Using Visual Media in a Voice Recital

The following thesis is a reflection of one student's process and execution of her vocal recital in which she incorporated visual media (digital paintings, light graphics, and videos). The author documented the technical and collaborative steps she took to prepare and perform her recital on December 5th, 2015. Preceding the chapters, the author includes a compilation of graphics or stills from the videos used in her recital. First, the author discusses why she felt it was important to present a recital in this manner. Next, the author elaborates on how her undergraduate studies and personal experience lead her to the idea of a multimedia recital. Following after, the author includes a copy of the program and program notes handed out at her December recital. Then, the author describes the inspiration and creation of each graphic for each song. Lastly, the author predicts how the experience of her recital will benefit her future professional endeavors. A DVD recording of the December recital is also available for viewing.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout my course study in Vocal Music Education, I have realized that a music educator must be more than a music teacher. With advancements in technology, it is the responsibility of a music educator to go beyond the usual curriculum to provide the most for his or her students. When I decided to do a recital as part of my thesis project, I knew I wanted to do more than a traditional classical voice recital. Voice recitals are typically comprised of a collection of songs from different music periods and varying languages that progress chronologically from Baroque to 20th Century. Although my recital included varied repertoire, the driving force for my recital was to pick music that inspired me visually. Vocal recitals, like teaching, take hours of practicing and planning. My vocal recital also included hours of video editing, audio editing, and composing. The technological aspect of my recital allowed for an innovative experience for the other performers, audience, and myself. It also allowed for several opportunities to collaborate and take charge of a performance as a producer.

I have always seen images when I listened to music, whether it be a mini movie, abstract images, or colors. To me, this concept is not entirely new, but I had yet to see it incorporated into a voice recital. Pop concerts have elaborate light shows and images that go along with their music to enhance the performance; music videos are created for songs; and movies like Disney's "Fantasia" embody the use of various types of imagery to coincide with the music played. I knew if I wanted to perform the repertoire the way I saw it, I needed to provide a visual representation of the piece in conjunction with the auditory performance. The journey of this project allowed me to wear many hats that a typical vocal major does not get to explore: director, composer, lyricist, videographer,

editor, producer; as well as performer. I also honed my leadership skills through new collaborations with other singers and visual artists. I successfully premiered my recital on December 5th, 2015. The end result was only possible after intense determination because of obstacles that arose along the way. This experience empowered me as a researcher, creator, performer, and person. The following paper explains my journey as the producer of my recital program.

CHAPTER I: Formulating the Idea

Several times in voice lessons, I have felt like I was compartmentalizing my approach to singing. One moment, I would be too worried about my abdominal wall's connection to the breath; having sufficient space and placement in my mouth; or my overall alignment in the body (shoulders rolled back, chest comfortably high, etc.). I would think too much about one section, and the others would falter. Everything did not click until I would visualize other images to connect all parts of my body. For example, I think of tiny streams of air escaping through my tear ducts when I sing. It is one clear image that aids in body alignment; my placement is focused forward; my breathing is stabilized; and I am able to produce my optimum sound.

Along with this idea of visual learning, listening to music is a visual process for me. As mentioned before, I often see pictures, colors, or storylines while listening to music. Other classical music mediums are doing the same, and I wanted to incorporate those three elements into my recital. An article recently published on the Australian National University's website mentions the use of a fully "digital set" for the School of Music's production of *L'Orfeo* by Claudio Monteverdi. They even collaborated with their School of Astrophysics and Astronomy to obtain an accurate star map for one of the scenes. Orchestras are using visual projections as well. Touring shows like "Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddess" will play the music from the video game while gameplay is shown. "The Music of John Williams" does the same with movie scenes

coinciding with the film score. Since other vocal and instrumental forms of classical music are adopting a 21st century approach to performance, exploring the use of visual media in a classical voice recital seemed appropriate.

I wanted to gain more insight on how other artists think about similar concepts. I emailed Hugo Leclercq, publically known as “Madeon,” who is a music producer and DJ. His shows rely heavily on a visual experience with the music.

Claudia Salcedo: “How important is having a visual concept for your shows?”

Hugo Leclercq: “Very, I think it's entirely part of the experience.”

CS: “Do you ever write music solely for a certain picture you have in mind?”

HL: “I'm very visual, and I get inspired by pictures. I will sometime write a musical section for a show thinking about a visual concept (aggressive music with red imagery, etc).”

CS: “Does your set govern the light show or display used? If so, what do you hope the audience experiences from having an ornate light show to accompany your set?”

HL: “Yes, I've programmed my own real time video set-up that reacts to which songs i'm playing and how I'm interacting with them.

This connection helps make the story narrated in the music clearer, more layered and multi-sensorial, creating an atmosphere you can lose yourself into.”

CS: “How personal is your visual display?”

HL: “I think it's a reflection of my tastes.”

CS: “Why is it important for you to have a specific visual display for your performance?”

HL: “In my live shows, I use a custom "diamond" shaped screen. A unique stage design gives a tangible architectural quality to the show. It helps me ensure it doesn't look like you're watching a movie. The non-standard screen setup makes it an object.”

(Personal Correspondence: November 19, 2014)

Inspired by Mr. Leclercq's input, I was invested in creating a program of music and visual media that would not only capture my tastes, but enhance the musical experience for the audience.

CHAPTER II: Literature and Program Notes

Programs and program notes were distributed at my recital. The audience would take time prior to the start of the recital to examine the repertoire list and composer notes. I also included a brief “Visual Concept” document to guide the audience through my ideas of the visual media they were about to experience. I do not include the “Visual Concept” document in this thesis because Chapter III provides more detail about each visual concept. It was important for me that the audience read the notes because I did not want them to enter the recital “blindly,” meaning, having no knowledge of the music they were about to hear. I believe the visual displays enhanced and confirmed several musical themes and translations written about in the program notes.

The University of Mississippi

Department of Music

Senior Recital

Claudia Salcedo, soprano

Price Walden, piano

“Visual Media with Music”

Claudia Salcedo

“Deh vieni, non tardar”
from *Le Nozze di Figaro*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Melanie Culhane, *soprano*

“Mi Sueño”

Edward Kilenyi
(1884-1968)

Megan Brock, *mezzo-soprano*

“Ouvre ton Coeur”

Georges Bizet
(1838-1875)

Ashley Ashmore, *mezzo-soprano*

“Esta Tierra”

Javier Busto
(b. 1949-)

Cody Arthur

Rachel Dennis

Ashley Ashmore

Anna Greenlee

Dale Beech

Zane Lynn

Megan Brock

Jessica Taylor

Melanie Culhane

Sergio Vergara

“Nacht und Träume”
“Gretchen am Spinnrade”

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

“Beau Soir”

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

“Can You Hear It?”
“You Can Overcome”
“I Am Who I Am”

Claudia Salcedo
(b. 1994-)

Claudia Salcedo is a student of Nancy Maria Balach

Nutt Auditorium

December 5th, 2015

7:30pm

Program Notes

“Deh vieni, non tardar”

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born on January 27, 1756, in Salzburg. He is widely recognized as one of the greatest composers in the history of Western music. With Haydn and Beethoven he brought to its height the achievement of the Viennese Classical school. Unlike any other composer in musical history, he wrote in all the musical genres of his day and excelled in every one.

Le nozze di Figaro K. 492, is a comic opera in four acts composed in 1786 with an Italian libretto written by Lorenzo Da Ponte. It premiered at the Burgtheater in Vienna on May 1, 1786. The opera's libretto is based on a stage comedy by Pierre Beaumarchais, *La folle journée, ou le Mariage de Figaro*

Knowing Figaro is nearby, Susanna teases Figaro by singing “Deh vieni, non tardar” to her beloved loud enough so he can hear her. Figaro is hiding behind a bush. He is under the impression Susanna is singing for the Count and becomes extremely jealous.

The moment finally arrives

When I'll enjoy [experience joy] without haste

In the arms of my beloved...

Fearful anxieties, get out of my heart!

Do not come to disturb my delight.

Oh, how it seems that to amorous fires

*The comfort of the place,
Earth and heaven respond,
[Oh, it seems that earth, heaven and this place
answerer my heart's amorous fire.]
As the night responds to my ruses.*

*Oh, come, don't be late, my beautiful joy
Come where love calls you to enjoyment
Until night's torches no longer shine in the sky
As long as the air is still dark
And the world quiet.*

*Here the river murmurs and the light plays
That restores the heart with sweet ripples
Here, little flowers laugh and the grass is fresh
Here, everything entices one to love's pleasures
Come, my dear, among these hidden plants.*

*Come, come!
I want to crown you with roses.*

(Translation: Naomi Gurt Lind)

“Mi Sueño”

Edward Kilenyi Sr. was a Hungarian-born violinist, composer, arranger, and teacher. He studied early on in Hungary, but he shortly studied with Mascagni in Rome and later attended the Cologne Conservatory. After immigrating to the United States, he attended Columbia University and studied with Cornelius Rybner and Daniel Gregory Mason. He died on August 1968.

“Mi Sueño” is based on a Mexican folk tune.

Oh! Without your love, I'll die, my dear!

Because you are a delusion.

You give my heart,

The chance of which I dream.

Don't look at me so, because I will die.

Well, I can't live without your scorn.

Oh! Look again, which is my adoration,

To have you with passion,

Angel of Love!

That here I come to beg

And plead forgiveness,

And if I should die, Farewell, Farewell!

“Ouvre ton Coeur”

Georges Bizet was born on October 25, 1838 in Paris, France. Mostly known for his opera *Carmen*, Bizet showed talent and promise as a composer at a young age. Born of musical parents, Bizet attended the Paris Conservatory. His realistic approach influenced the *verismo* school of opera at the end of the 19th century. He died on June 3, 1875.

“Ouvre ton Coeur” was written in 1860. It uses a text from librettist Louis Delâtre,

*The daisy has closed its petals,
The shadow has closed its eyes for the day.
Beauty, will you speak with me?
Open your heart to my love.*

*Open your heart, o young angel, to my flame
So that a dream may enchant your sleep.
I wish to reclaim my soul,
As a flower turns to the sun!*

(Translation: Ahmed E. Ismail)

“Esta Tierra” - Javier Busto

Javier Busto was born on 1949 in Hondarribia, San Sebastián, Spain. He graduated from Valladolid University with a doctorate in medicine. He is a self-taught musician. He furthered his studies in choral conducting with Erwin List. He served as the conductor of

the Eskifaia Choir from 1978 to 1994. His compositions have won numerous European prizes.

*Do not look for me in the wilderness, however high,
nor look for me in the sea, however wide it seems.
Look here, in this low land, with bridge and pine grove,
with points and slow water,
where one can hear it ripple although the sound fades out,
although the sound fades out*

(Translation: GL)

“Nacht und Träume”

Franz Schubert was born on January 31, 1797 in Austria. He is ranked as one of the best composers of the early Romantic era, and master of German Lieder. His music education began around the age of six and then piano lessons around the age of nine via his older brother. He only lived 32 years, but in that time, Schubert wrote about 600 Lieder, operas, ten complete or nearly complete symphonies, liturgical music, a large body of chamber and solo piano music.

“Nacht und Träume” (Night and Dreams) was published in 1825. Schubert used text by Matthäus von Collin. The piano part keeps a steady, slow sixteenth note pattern throughout the piece which contrasts the sustained, lush vocal line.

*Blessed Night descends
dreams also descend
like the moonlight through the night air,
dreams descend through man's silent breast .
They listen to them with pleasure;
they call when the day awakens:
Return again, blessed night!
Lovely dreams, return again!*

(Translation: Bard Suverkrop)

“Gretchen am Spinnrade” uses the text from Part One, Scene 15 of Goethe's *Faust*. The piano resembles the spinning wheel and the spinning thoughts.

*My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy,
I will find it never
and never more.

Where I do not have him,
That is the grave,
The whole world
Is bitter to me.*

My poor head

Is crazy to me,

My poor mind

Is torn apart.

For him only, I look

Out the window

Only for him do I go

Out of the house.

His tall walk,

His noble figure,

His mouth's smile,

His eyes' power,

And his mouth's

Magic flow,

His handclasp,

and ah! his kiss!

My peace is gone,

My heart is heavy,

I will find it never

and never more.

(Translation: Aaron Green)

“Beau Soir”

Claude Debussy was born on August 22, 1862 in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France. He was one of the major composer during the French Impressionist movement, however, he did not like the term “impressionism” applied to his music.

“Beau Soir” or “Beautiful Evening,” was written around 1877 when Debussy was 15.

The legato vocal line, in simple triple meter, represents the stillness of the evening and the landscape. The accompaniment, in compound triple meter, keeps the song moving, arpeggiating chords that give the impression of the splashes of color the evening sun paints on the world.

When streams turn pink in the setting sun,

And a slight shudder rushes through the wheat fields,

A plea for happiness seems to rise out of all things

And it climbs up towards the troubled heart.

A plea to relish the charm of life

While there is youth and the evening is fair,

For we pass away, as the wave passes:

The wave to the sea, we to the grave.

(Translation: Pierre Bernac)

Claudia Salcedo was born on May 9, 1994 in Downey (Los Angeles County), California. She started composing around the age of 14, but never wrote anything down; it was all in her head. At the age of 18, Claudia took composing more seriously and used notation software to record her compositions. Claudia uses composing like a musical representation of a diary.

“Can You Hear it?” is more than the common feeling of having a crush on someone and not wanting them to know. The girl is experiencing insecurity and not feeling good enough to be her crush’s love interest. This is dedicated to everyone who never felt “worthy” to be loved or cared about. The reason “my feelings for him, my crush on him,” and “my love for him” is jarring is because the girl is scared about not only her crush finding out about these things, but she feels wrong that she has these feelings for this guy who, in her mind, is “out of her league.” The A-major section is this girl’s short-lived glimmer of hope. The significance of the section being so short is to show her overwhelming insecurity.

“You Can Overcome” was written in mind for anyone struggling with depression, anxiety, or any other mental condition of similar nature. It was important for me to voice this piece for a young women’s choir. Usually, women’s choir music is very “butterflies and rainbows,” but I feel it is important to have them sing about serious subject matter that actually starts at a young age.

“I Am Who I Am” was written in the summer of 2015. It is dedicated to everyone who has made my journey as a singer and educator worthwhile. It is a musical “thank you” to my supporters, friends, colleagues, professors, and so on.

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CHAPTER III: Creating the Visual Media - Inspirations, Purpose, and Significance

In order to create cohesion between the music and the visual media, I knew I needed to create images that both spoke to me and also related to the music. To achieve this, each graphic or video highlighted musical and/or textual aspects of the songs. The hardware and software used were a Canon video camera, Audacity (audio editing), Premiere (video editing), Ableton (Digital Audio Workplace), Finale (music notation software) and a Zoom Recorder. Various songs have collaborative media.

“Deh vieni, non tardar” – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

For the Mozart aria, I wanted to bring “Deh vieni, non tardar” to life with a modern day setting. Several operas performed today rely on digital backdrops versus the traditional painted sets in order to stay relevant as well as create an effective setting (Various 1). With this in mind, a digital painting perfectly fit the execution of the aria. Though the format of the visual was modern day, I kept the subject of the visual true to the setting of the opera “Le Nozze di Figaro.” The character, Susanna, sings the aria in the garden of the house where she is working. She knows Figaro is hiding in the shrubbery, so she sings her love song, but Figaro believes she is singing the song for the Count. I entrusted the help of an aspiring animator at Memphis College of Art, Jeremy Clark, to create the digital painting. I described to him a garden scene with plenty of foliage and a romantic night sky.

Jeremy was able to produce my vision. I believe choosing purple and blue to create the night time effect added to the romantic feel of the song. It was also important to me in every collaborative effort to allow the individual artist to stick to his or her own style. Jeremy prefers working with cartoon graphics, so I knew the digital painting would not be verisimilar.



Figure 3-1: Digital Painting for “Deh vieni, non tardar” from *Le Nozze di Figaro* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

“Mi Sueño” – Edward Kilyeni

I also asked Jeremy to create a digital painting for the art song, “Mi Sueño.” I wanted to use the model of digital backgrounds from opera and translate it into an art song. The message of “Mi Sueño” is essentially “Without your love, I am dead.” I wanted to evoke a sense of solace, depression, and death. My original email to Jeremy stated, “I’m seeing the character in a dimly lit room, with a table in the center that has a small

vase with a slightly wilted rose. One chair pushed in and the other is out as if someone had just gotten up.”

The use of muted yellows and browns portrays decay or time passed which is only accented by the dying rose. When asked about his drawing process for music, Jeremy said,

“I have to make conscious decisions about the tone and mood of the pictures as opposed to just putting random colors down. There’s a specific type of lighting that can affect the piece depending on how it’s managed. For instance, how the candles were the only source of light... provided a faint glow, or how the moon in the other gave a dark purple tint to the piece.”



Figure 3-2: Digital Painting for “Mi Sueño” by Edward Kilyeni

“Ouvre ton Coeur” – Georges Bizet

As soon as I heard “Ouvre ton Coeur,” I knew I needed to have a dancer represent the rhythmic and lyrical activity of the music. For the sake of timing, I was hesitant to try to have a dance choreographed exactly in time with the music. I would have no idea how fast or slow my singer would take the piece in performance. I had to rely on other recordings from YouTube to estimate the timing. I wanted to video a set of fast and energetic dance moves as well as slow and smooth movements. “Ouvre ton Couer” has two contrasting sections that repeat in that style. Shooting the video in black and white provided more drama and prevented the busyness of any colors to distract from the movement. Motion was most important for this visual.

The filming and editing for this piece was the most difficult. I had to reshoot the entire video because the first take did not quite meet my vision. The dancer was not dressed in the right attire and the dance moves were not cohesive. The new version was far more fluid. To gain a mix of complex moves and lyrical ones, I had Kelsey Knecht dance to the actual song and to other pieces as well. She selected pieces that she enjoyed dancing to and I recorded her. I was able to accomplish variation of dance moves, but the editing was challenging, running into several continuity errors. I had to make sure the clips made sense together as a complete dance and that they paired together with the fast and lyrical sections of the song.



Figure 3-3: Frame Still from Video for “Ouvre ton Coeur” by Georges Bizet

“Esta Tierra” – Javier Busto

The text of “Esta Tierra” is all about searching through nature to find oneself and I knew I wanted photographer, Anna Brigance (who specializes in nature and landscape photography) to handle this visual. Before creating the visual, I asked the singers what they had in their minds while they were singing the song. A lot of them thought of nature and warm scenes before I even mentioned my vision to them. It was very interesting to get that feedback and realize that we had similar ideas in mind. Also, it helped them to gain a better understanding of the song and perform more expressively. When the video was completed, I sent it to the singers so they would see our shared vision come to life. One singer in particular, Cody Arthur, had this to say about performing with a visual:

“Performing with a visual aid in concert was unlike any other concert I had experienced. Being a visual learner, the concept really made sense to

me. Having a physical image that the director, Claudia, wanted to convey with the piece gave a more defined mood and interpretation to each piece whether it be a solo or choral work. The images and videos also successfully provided a background or setting for each piece which would otherwise be up to the audience's personal interpretation. From collaborating with the ensemble on what the song "sounded like" or meant to them, Claudia had a video made and we fed off of the mood and idea of the video in the performance. I think having a provided visual aid makes the concert and performance more personal to the audience because it is an outward representation of what the performer has in mind for their interpretation. It was truly a unique experience to collaborate in such a way."

Though I did not compile the footage for this video, it only made the editing process more difficult. The shots were beautiful and exactly what I wanted, but the way it was shot was a challenge when it came to editing. The videographer, Anna Brigance, took the task of "searching in the woods" and captured appropriate footage, but the motion that resulted became distracting to the song. I spent over an hour waiting on my video editing software to completely stabilize the entire video. It was too shaky. Besides stabilizing the footage, I entered "fade in/out" transitions between the clips to create more smoothness instead of jump cuts.



Figure 3-4: Frame Still from Video for “Esta Tierra” by Javier Busto

“Beau Soir” – Claude Debussy

This is the piece that started this entire journey. When I first heard “Beau Soir,” I immediately thought of pictures and colors, which is fitting since the genre its genre, French Impressionism, was inspired by Claude Monet’s impressionistic painting. For my voice lessons, I am required to write a personal and literal translation of every piece. In addition to writing, I felt inclined to draw pictures in the margins of the paper. For me, this served as what I would visualize when I performed the piece. From here I wondered if having a visual for everyone to see would enhance the performance as well as the audience’s reaction to the recital. This is why I claim “Beau Soir” to be the piece that “started it all.” I wanted to stay true to the history of the genre and the meaning of the text so the visual is capturing an artist painting an evening sky. Though the painting style is not Impressionistic, I envisioned the painting unfolding with the music.

Anna Brigrance also did the footage for “Beau Soir” and the editing for the video was smoother than the rest. The task was simple: edit a progression of a painting. Anna also shot clips of the artist’s essential tools and work space. The extra clips made the video seem more like an artist profile or mini documentary versus one long “take” of painting being completed. My original plan was to do one continuous take of the artist painting and edit the duration to fit the length of the song. I chose to do it documentary style to add variety and keep interest.

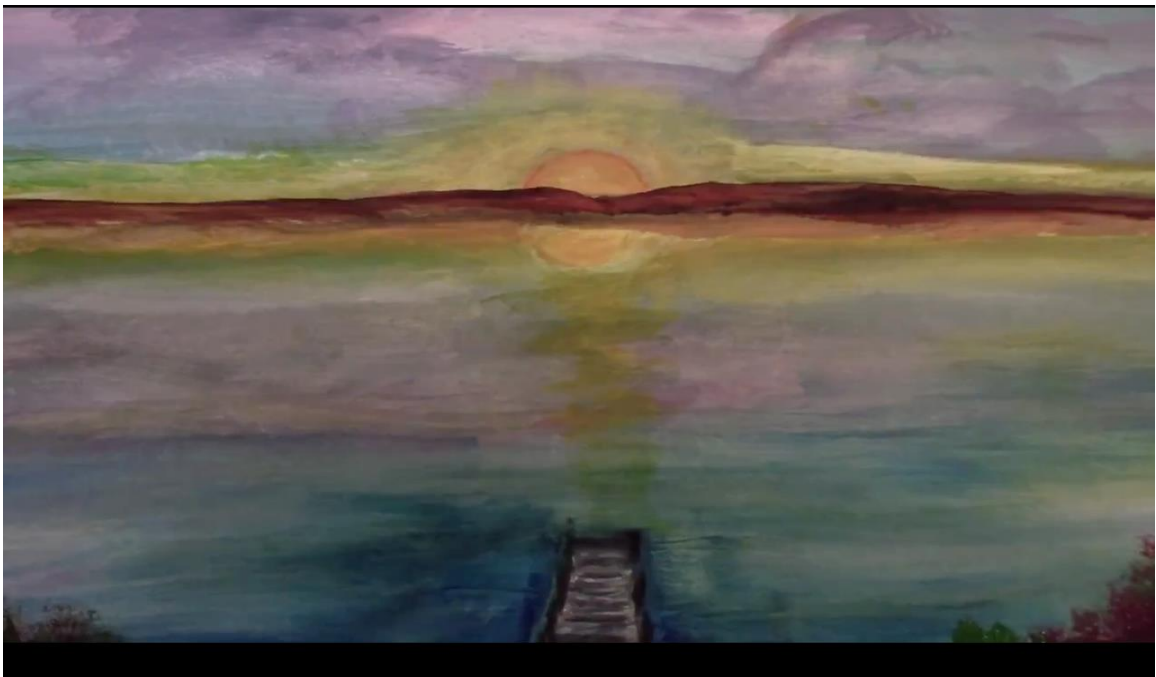


Figure 3-5: Frame Still from Video for “Beau Soir” by Claude Debussy

“Nacht und Träume” – Franz Schubert

I saw colors when I heard “Nacht und Träume.” Specifically, I heard blues in the B Major section and purples when it switched to G Major. ‘Hearing’ colors is often referred to as an aspect of synesthesia. Furthermore, seeing colors when listening to music is also categorized as synesthesia (Zamm 1). I highlighted the concept of synesthesia in the visual for “Nacht und Träume” by displaying the colors I saw when I

listened to the song. I also wanted the colors to “grow” as the song progressed versus having a still shot of the color blue and then the color purple. This way, the entire song would be painted out in color in a manner that would resemble the tempo and legato line of the music.

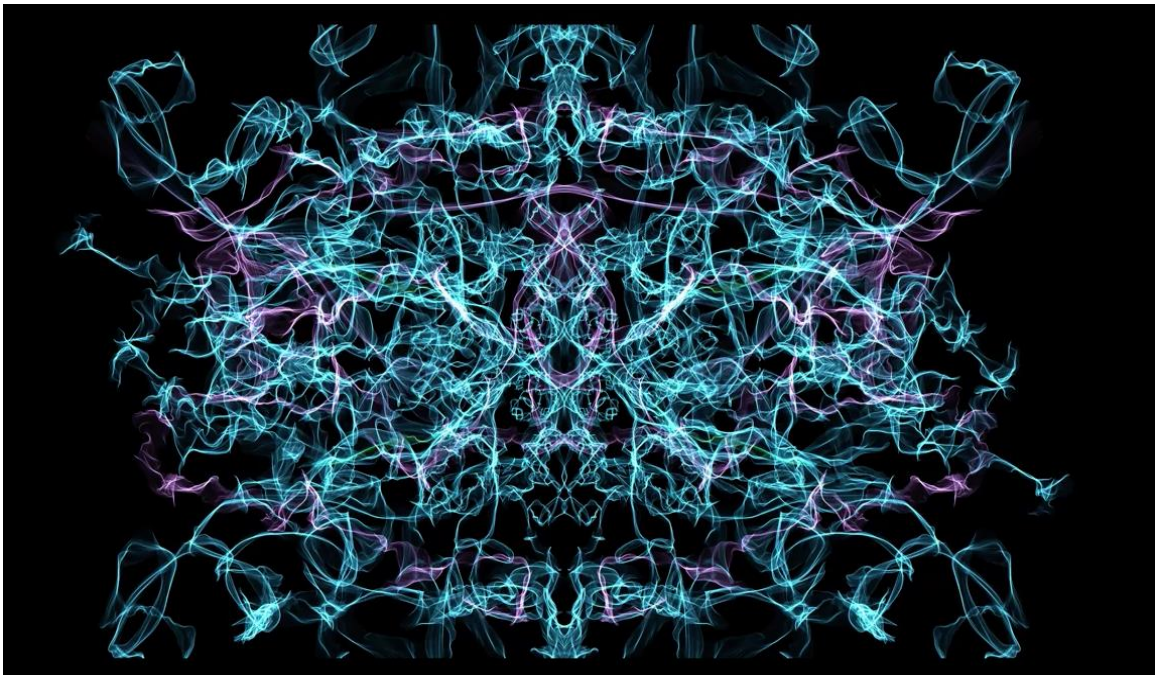


Figure 3-6: Final Light Graphic for “Nacht und Träume” by Franz Schubert

“Gretchen am Spinnrade” – Franz Schubert

Similar to the other piece, “Gretchen am Spinnrade” needed a visual that accentuated the “spinning” tempo while focusing on the colors I saw when I heard the piece. In order to do this, the light graphic primarily grew in circular motions. I used warm, fiery colors to signify burning passion and intensity. The complexity of the visual would also increase with the climax of the song and therefore create an overall arc of phrasing.

I used weavesilk.com in order to create the light graphics for the two Schubert pieces. I opened up weavesilk.com, chose the appropriate colors, turned on the tracks and

painted along with the music. I then exported to QuickTime video into my editing software crop top the browser image and exported the video into a compatible format to match the rest of the video formatting for my recital. I encountered some lagging when trying to fluidly move the mouse to create a smooth painting. This created some timing issues and did not completely create the unfolding painting I wanted. The image was correct yet the motion in which it grew was not how I wanted it. Even though it did not go “perfectly,” the idea of colors matching the song translated regardless.



Figure 3-7: Final Light Graphic for “Gretchen am Spinnrade” by Franz Schubert

“Can You Hear It?” – Claudia Salcedo

This was the first and only piece that I had performed prior to my recital with a visual. The preparation and practice to execute this piece serve as a model for my recital. It gave me insight to the obstacles I would face in video and audio editing, as well as the performance aspect. The inspiration for the video came from the idea of creating a music video for classical music. The meaning of the song is that feeling of intense insecurity

when someone has a crush on someone but he or she does not think they are worthy of loving them. I wanted the visual to represent the background action or internal monologue that is going on in the girl's head while the singer is performing. Throughout the song, the emotions and contrasting musical themes aligned with what the girl's facial expressions in the video.

I had Anna Brigance also do the footage for this video back in Spring 2015. This was different from the other two videos she did because I was directing the shots. For the other two videos, I gave her my vision and let her complete the task. With this video, I made sure to get specific shots like "holds cup anxiously" or "face changes mood."

The audio for the track was created by writing out the music in Finale, exporting the MIDI tracks from Finale into Ableton, and then assigning instrument sounds to the MIDI tracks. Ableton allows the user to edit the sounds of the instrument (traditional or electronic) by adjusting the spread, attack, reverb, and various other options. I played the MIDI channels with the assigned instruments and while recording, I toggled between the different instruments to change the sounds when needed. For example, the beginning intro has the electronic sounded chords set, but the slightly static sound with the chimes on top was created by turning the "Distort" dial on the "Chimes and Bells" instrument (the "Bells" section was disabled). Furthermore, I created crescendos and decrescendos when I live recorded by adjusting the instrument settings at the appropriate measures during the song.



Figure 3-8: Frame Still from Video for “Can You Hear It?” by Claudia Salcedo

“You Can Overcome” – Claudia Salcedo

I ran through several ideas for the visual for “You Can Overcome” and was definitely the most difficult to create a visual. In the end, I chose to have it styled as an online video where young adults either confess their mental health issues or some trauma that they have gone through in their lives. In most of these videos, the person’s face is covered while they flip through the pages of text telling their story. Since the song was written for those who struggle with mental illness’s such as depression and anxiety it seemed completely fitting to do a similar style video for this song. Overall, the message of the song dominated the visual instead of trying to create a story line or something abstract to fit with the music and text. The text was the most important part.

Similar to the Schubert pieces, I recorded the footage while listening to the track. I needed to make sure the written lyric pages matched up with the lyrics sung on

the track. The overall process was simple, however, it took about five takes to get the video to unfold smoothly. I only edited in clips during the “ah” section of the song. Other than that, the video consisted of one long take.

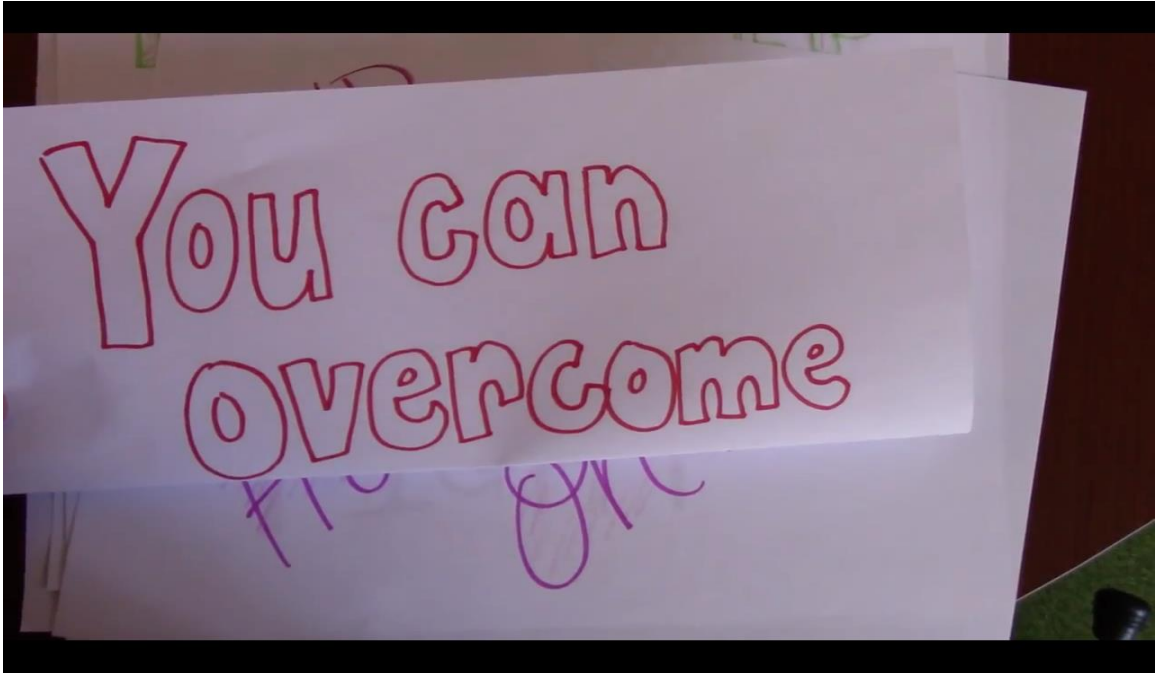


Figure 3-9: Frame Still from Video for “You Can Overcome” by Claudia Salcedo

“I Am Who I Am” – Claudia Salcedo

The visual for this piece is similar in that I wanted a video to capture a storyline, however, it was a lot more personal to me but also personal to the audience. I wanted to focus on scenes that related to the audience. I wrote this piece specifically for my recital to be a closer and to be my final farewell to whomever attended my recital. For these reasons, the video for “I Am Who I Am” consisted of different scenes of Oxford and the university. Though it was a collection of my experiences and some of my favorite spots in Oxford, I knew that it was enough to create a sense of home or nostalgia for some of the audience members.

This video is a compilation of some of my favorite places and moments throughout my second to last semester at Ole Miss. I wanted this video to have a feeling of home and also farewell. I hoped to achieve a balance of campus events and scenery. Since I wrote the song specifically to be the closer of my recital, I wanted a relatable video.



Figure 3-10: Frame Still from Video for “I Am Who I Am” by Claudia Salcedo

CHAPTER IV

Performance Execution – Achievements and Personal Growth

The progression of hats I wore during the recital chronologically were music director, conductor, and singer. My job began backstage as I watched my singers perform my vision. I had to balance overseeing the media PowerPoint, watching the performances and hearing the audience reaction, while focusing as a performer. It was difficult to make the transition from music director to conductor in the moment. I went from relying on the singers to fulfill their musical duties, to the singers relying on me to conduct them through the choral piece. I specifically remember the choir all staring at me backstage and I realizing it was my turn to be onstage.

Conducting at an appropriate tempo with rubato while making eye contact with my singers; keeping an eye on the video; and peeking at my music was no easy task. But, knowing the PowerPoint operator would stop the video whenever I cut off the choir was comforting. Overall, my attention was focused on conveying expression with my face and hands to my ensemble. Regardless of the video, their vocal expression was a priority. I had to remind myself to enjoy the moment and not let my conducting pattern resemble a robotic metronome. I, along with the ensemble, became a part of the visual.

Vocally, the hardest transition was the start of “Nacht und Träume,” because it was the first piece on which I sang. All my nerves and apprehensions were challenged into the starting [ha] syllable of “Heil’ge.” After that, a lot went very well. My most challenging piece, “Gretchen am Spinnrade,” was especially successful. In early rehearsals of that song, it was exhausting for me to sing. I was proud of my progress and the success of my final performance of the piece. “I Am Who I Am” was also challenging. My nerves were getting the best of me when I slowly began to realize that it was the première performance of something I created. The song is personal to me and I was sharing it with the audience for which I wrote it. Emotions were high and I actually choked up towards the end.

By far, I grew the most as an artist both personally and technically. My stamina as a singer has increased by preparing for the recital. I am able to do more with my voice and myself as a performer than reiterate notes and rhythms. Specifically, my tone, breath support, and diction is better than when I first began my studies. Furthermore, my confidence level as a creator has drastically improved. I had not realized how much of myself I had put into creating the overall recital program. Publicizing my visual concepts and compositions has forced me to accept myself as a complete musician.

CHAPTER V: Future Skills and Exploration

A major aspect of my recital that served as the foundation for a lot of success was collaboration. Working with others is a skill I will always use as a future music educator. I will constantly communicate with administrators, students, other teachers, parents, and the community. I was able to develop my organizational, rehearsal, and communication skills, which are all key elements to being an exceptional music educator. The process included correspondence, scheduling, rehearsing, and directing. This project wonderfully mirrors what I will be doing in schools.

Another collaborative factor was working with technology. In my experience as a student teacher, technology is essential. In most classrooms, computers, instructional videos, and interactive Smart boards are the driving instruments for class instruction. In the music classroom, creating practice tracks, converting file formats and audio editing performance recordings are all tasks I must complete for my students. Executing this non-required recital as an undergraduate was my only direct practice of all these skills to prepare me for doing the same in the professional world. I am thrilled this thesis project enabled this unique learning opportunity.

Ultimately, I anticipate my thesis project to serve as a comprehensive model of the innovative approach one can take with Classical music performance and education, not only as an undergraduate student, but as a future educator and performer. If opera companies and orchestras are effectively turning to digital media to renovate their art

form (Nousiainen 93), then I believe it wise for the field of music education to do the same. If I were to further this research, I would focus more on the audience's reaction and experience. Generally, the feedback I have received has been positive, but I would like to track specific data about the audience's perception of the visual media and their aesthetic interpretation. In the classroom, I will incorporate visual representations of classical pieces and choral music into my teaching. Successfully accomplishing a recital program of this caliber takes music technology skills, collaboration, voice instruction, and hours of rehearsal, which are all essential tasks for a music educator. However, the determining factor of being victorious as an educator, performer, and musician is the self-responsibility to do more than the traditional checklist.

CONCLUSION

James Hall discusses song as “not mere formal beauty, but rather characteristic beauty. Melody and the span of its phrases, harmony, and the color of its chords, form and the shape of its being – all result from the text, which, prior to song, stood alone, but now in song finds fuller meaning” (4-5). I believe my recital helped to heighten the overall aesthetic of each song by translating the music and text in a visual format for the audience to understand. By emphasizing musical themes and aspects of the text, I feel the audience and performers were able to gain a new appreciation for the song and art form.

Though the vocal demand, editing processes, and collaborative efforts were strenuous to manage all at once, I am proud of what I have accomplished as a performer, artist, and educator. The work load for this recital exceeded my expectations and pushed me farther than I had imagined. I am thankful for the skills I have strengthened through my research. I can confidently say I am a true musician.

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